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UNCLAS HARARE 001671

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR GURNEY
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION EDITORIALS AGAINST LIFTING OF
TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON MUGABE AND GOZ OFFICIALS; HARARE

11. Back to back editorials in the August 25 edition of the independent daily "The Daily News" and the July 24 edition of its sister weekly "The Daily News on Sunday" are against the call for the lifting of travel and economic restrictions imposed on Robert Mugabe and Zimbabwe government officials by the United States, European Union (EU), Australia and Switzerland. Excerpts follow:

12. Under headline "Zimbabweans betrayed again" the "Daily News" (08/25) comments:

"As if their inaction as Zimbabwe collapsed was not enough betrayal, southern African leaders now want to scuttle efforts by others to try and pressure the government to abandon its ruinous policies that have brought this once prosperous nation to its knees. Southern African Development Community (SADC) ministers meeting in Tanzania last Saturday called for the lifting of travel and financial sanctions imposed on President Robert Mugabe and his officials. . . by the EU, Australia, Switzerland and U. S. A. . . Clearly it is more important for SADC that Mugabe, his officials and their families are able to travel across the globe as they wish than that the misery they have caused in Zimbabwe is ended. Claims by SADC leaders that there is progress in Zimbabwe, that there is thawing of relations between Mugabe and his ruling ZANU PF and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) are mere lies that should be dismissed with the contempt they deserve. . . Whatever the case, SADC has a choice to either be on the same side with tormented Zimbabweans or it will become irrelevant."

13. Under headline "Lessons on sanctions" the "Daily News on Sunday" (08/24) comments:

". . . Sanctions are designed to punish regimes which ignore with impunity the rules of the democratic game and expect other players to treat them with respect. Muammar Gaddafi took long to pay compensation for the Lockerbie disaster. But the sanctions must have convinced him that paying up was a healthier option than continuing on the stubborn path to the economic ruin of his country. . . Rhodesia faced United Nations sanctions; Zimbabwe does not. There is no U. N. resolution for sanctions on the country. . . The 'sanctions' are nowhere near what Rhodesia faced, yet the effect is far more devastating. . . Most of the sanctions have been imposed on individuals of the arrogant regime. To tell the people that calling for an end to these 'smart' sanctions is everyone's patriotic duty is nonsensical. If the end of sanctions strengthens ZANU PF's capacity to inflict more pain on the people, then they cannot in all conscience support such calls."

SULLIVAN